

Gazette YEAR IN REVIEW 2008



Digging deep: Peter Manning from Evergreen Turf, Graeme Colless from Dad and Dave's Turf Supplies, Kirk Flemming from Flemming Golf, Richmond Club Chairman Dave Butler, Richmond Club group CEO Kimberley Talbot and Hawkesbury Race Club marketing manager Vivienne Leggett were all in support of the Hawkesbury Living Cancer Foundation.

December

FIVE ABC Learning Centres and two CFK Childcare Centres in the Hawkesbury went into receivership following the fall of early learning giant ABC.

The future of ABC centres in Agnes Banks, Bligh Park, Riverstone North and two at RAAF Base Richmond, plus CFK centres at Freemans Reach and North Richmond, were all uncertain. According to The Gazette calculations, more than 300 children and their parents were potentially affected.

- Hundreds of Hawkesbury families breathed a sigh of relief following the Reserve Bank's decision to slash interest

rates by one percentage point. The cut meant a household with a \$400,000 mortgage would save \$257 a month provided their bank passed on the full reduction in official rates.

- A 20-year-old P-plate driver was killed instantly in a two-vehicle crash at Cranebrook. Police said the woman's Toyota Echo appeared to have crossed to the wrong side of the road while travelling south on The Northern Road. It collided head-on with a Mercedes panel van driven by a 45-year-old Londonderry man, who received minor cuts in the crash.

- Windsor Local Court became the latest victim in a range of western Sydney court cutbacks when its sitting days were axed

from five to three. Hawkesbury solicitor Roderick Storie said the reduction in days would mean cases would be drawn out and allocated less time – potentially jeopardising the safety of residents, particularly in domestic violence cases.

- Hawkesbury Living announced its plan to establish the Hawkesbury Living Cancer Foundation in support of bringing oncology treatment to the district.

In support, Hawkesbury Race Club would host a race day on February 5, 2009, as the foundation's first major fundraiser.

The foundation was developed in part as a tribute to Erik Hausoul, the Richmond High School student who passed away from the rare cancer, osteosarcoma.



Gift: Colleen Reyes, with son Connor, breathed a sigh of relief when interest rates were slashed. Photo: Aaron Davenport

Efforts put in place to prevent tombstone identity thefts

EFFORTS to prevent tombstone identity theft will be strengthened as the State's 19 million records of births, deaths and marriages are combined on a new \$3.3 million computer database, said Attorney General John Hatzistergos.

Mr Hatzistergos said that for the first time, the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages would migrate its records into a single database, which will strengthen security and reduce the possibility of anybody committing identity fraud.

"Hollywood has dreamed up situations where unscrupulous characters go to graveyards to locate a tombstone of someone of about the same age who'd died early in life," Mr Hatzistergos said.

The story goes, he said, that the would-be thief would then apply for a copy of the dead person's birth certificate and use it

to build an assumed identity. "It would be very difficult to get away with tombstone identity theft in NSW because you have to prove your identity before you are given a copy of a birth certificate," he said.

"However, we know of a number of occasions in recent years when people applied for the birth certificates of people who were dead."

Mr Hatzistergos said that in 2005, registry staff contacted police after the name given in connection with a birth certificate application was located on the deaths registry. A similar incident also happened in 2006.

He said the registry's new computer database, known as Lifelink, would merge all the State's records. These go back as far as 1787, when events were recorded on the First Fleet before it reached Australia.

The contract to build the database has been awarded to Victorian-based company UXC, which now has the enormous task of migrating all the State's registry records together.

Mr Hatzistergos said Lifelink would guard against identity fraud because all the birth, death and marriage events associated with an individual would be contained on a single "citizen-based" electronic file.

"Registry staff are already trained to be on the lookout for people who act suspiciously and will ask for additional proof of identification if they suspect someone is attempting to commit fraud."

He said attempted frauds, aside from tombstone identity fraud, had included trying to change the name of a child to avoid losing custody, and the changing of a name to avoid being deported.



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